

MINUTES

Citizen's District Council Meeting
City of Muskegon CDBG
Conference Room 203
Muskegon, Michigan
Tuesday, February 4, 2014

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Tom Pastoor, at 5:40 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken by Laura Hichue

Present:	Tom Pastoor, Addie Sanders-Randall, Kim Burr, Chris Carter, Billie Quinn, Commissioner Ken Johnson
Absent:	Rosalind Ford
Staff Present:	Oneata Bailey, Laura Hichue, Frank Peterson
Guest:	Dave Alexander, M-Live Muskegon Chronicle

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Chris Carter to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2013 meeting. Billie Quinn seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

- Priority Home Repair Program

Oneata reviewed activity of the Priority Repair program that the Board had requested; she provided a breakdown of neighborhoods and what work was performed.

Oneata stated that many of those receiving help with their roofs had received letters of cancelation from their insurance companies if they did not replace their roof.

Mr. Pastoor asked if the program was through word of mouth or advertised; Oneata referred to Mr. Alexander about being advertised. Mr. Alexander asked if there was money still available.

Oneata stated the Housing Repair Program is the largest funded program for the City through CDBG and the goal is to assist as many households as possible. She further explained the policy change made by the CDC last year regarding the frequency and amount of assistance. That change has slowed down the use of funds.

Mr. Pastoor expressed concern that McLaughlin and Sheldon Park had no households served and was there a way to get the word out about the program more effectively.

Oneata stated that the neighborhood associations were a good way to get information to citizens.

Discussion took place regarding Sheldon Park and that the Evanston Avenue Church would be a good place to send information to due to it being active in the neighborhood activities.

Mr. Pastoor would like to see a way to get the word out on a hard copy, such as an insert in neighborhood newsletters. He would like to investigate how to publicize the programs available through CDBG and “toot our horn” about the work that has been done.

Mr. Peterson expressed the pros and cons of educating contractors about the programs.

Mr. Carter asked if it would be possible to put an informational spot on the government access channel before or after Commission meetings on television. Oneata stated she could check with the City Clerk about that possibility.

Mr. Carter further asked if there was a surplus of money. Oneata stated that the 13-14 program was still going on and there was approximately \$60,000 still remaining.

Mrs. Burr asked if there were many applications coming in for 2014.

Oneata stated that 3 furnaces had been done and roofs were not being addressed at this time due to snow. She stated that Safebuilt has been helpful in informing owners that have tarps on their roofs, or the roofs look bad, about the City’s programs.

Mrs. Burr noted that no Hispanic household had been assisted.

Oneata stated that St. Jean’s had been sent flyers in the past of different programs for them to share with their members and could continue to be a point of contact for that community.

Mr. Pastoor stated that other gathering places in neighborhoods would be good places to put information.

Mr. Carter said they, as CDC members, could also get informational flyers out to different locations as they see where it could be helpful.

- Houses w/Lease Option

Mrs. Burr asked what was found out about selling the houses on a land contract that were being rented.

Oneata said the City Attorney said it could be done but HUD said the City has to be the owner and if someone were buying on a land contract, the city would not be in a position to ask for income verification or go into the home units annually to verify they are still up to code. HUD has certain requirements that the City needs to be able to do as the owner of the property.

NEW BUSINESS

- 2014 Grant Applications

Oneata stated that Sunday, February 16, a public notice will be in the paper for Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDO's) that are in the process of making or proposing affordable housing units in the coming year to apply for funds. She stated that the regular CHDO's, such as Habitat for Humanity and Community enCompass are moving ahead with projects according to their Quarterly Reports; and Trinity Housing has recently been approved for funds but they do not have a house yet to rehab and may be unable to get it done by June. She advised the Board to keep those types of things in mind as the applications come in for more funding.

Mr. Johnson asked what happens if an organization does not use its money.

Oneata stated the City will take it back and use it on one of the City's properties as long as the CHDO requirement of 15% of the allocation has been met, which it has.

Mr. Carter asked if CDBG applications were going out also.

Oneata stated there was a meeting coming up the following week with the City Manager and City staff, but there was not a lot of unspoken dollars to give. She stated she was hopeful in March that there would be some idea, based on the public planning sessions and the City meeting next week, of how much money might be available to make a change, show the public that the City was listening and take one of the ideas and fund it.

Mr. Pastoor stated that the funding is an investment in the City. CDBG funds are necessary and used for infrastructure and benefit all. The HOME funds are also an investment and the City will get a return through development at least double. He asked if there is money left over from an organization, is it possible to redistribute that money to the other CHDO's. The City would get more return on investment by giving it to an organization rather than the City doing the work.

Oneata stated there were several CHDO's asking for monies this year and it could be possible to give it all away so that every applicant has or gets a grant to be able to continue their work. She said she did not have a problem with that due to proceeds from the sale of houses pending and would like to see other organizations get it. She further stated that she wasn't sure some of the current CHDO's were ready for more at this time due to their projects not being completed.

Mr. Pastoor stated that the meeting next week could identify the amount of money available for new and different ideas from the ones in the last few years.

Mr. Carter stated he would like to see a focus on youth that is different, aside from the Youth Grant.

Oneata stated that the Youth Grants are available, but if there is a need, it is possible some funds could go there; nothing was off the table.

Mr. Pastoor asked about the parks and that different groups were looking for assistance for the parks.

Discussion took place about various existing youth programs such as the evening program and Muskegon High School.

Mr. Pastoor asked when the grant applications would be going out.

Oneata stated the applications would not be returned before the next CDC meeting but the notes from the 2 planning sessions would be sent to the Board before the next meeting and the Board can discuss them at the March meeting.

- Staff Reports

Frank Peterson re-introduced himself to the Board and explained that he was there so the members could put a face with the name. He also talked about some of the upcoming plans as far as funding for the coming year.

Mr. Pastoor stated the Board was excited about the energy and possibilities that are being felt.

Mr. Carter asked if the proposed development of the building on Third Street for a grocery store would be eligible for CDBG money.

Oneata stated that it would have to have an affordable housing unit in it to qualify for CDBG funding. She did state that the City was looking at getting an affordable housing unit in the downtown area as well as other areas to make a presence. CNS recently purchased a home through tax reversion on Austin Street and will be demolishing the house. The neighbor wants to purchase the lot and will be able to use the extra yard and garage. Oneata said she had hoped to be able to rehab the house and have a home in East Muskegon, but it was too deteriorated to save.

Discussion took place further about the proposed downtown grocery store. Mr. Pastoor mentioned the possibility of a food co-op but with the availability of food trucks and neighborhood gardens, a co-op may be difficult to operate.

Oneata discussed M-Live's Top 5 items from the public planning sessions that were held in January. One of the items was a link from the downtown area to the beach; another was focusing on seniors, specifically snow removal; the Nims collaboration with the City in developing a park on the former Nims school site; and diversified residential home options. Oneata stated that the City, along with Norton Shores and Muskegon Heights, is trying to get a Target Market Analysis for the County to see what should be done in the future as far as developing affordable housing areas and who to attract to the Muskegon area. Mr. Carter stated the thought about the current farmer's market property that will be moving soon becoming a possible housing development. Mr. Peterson said the City has committed for the first year not to do anything with the flea market but it will be addressed after that and there will need to be soil testing. Mr. Alexander gave some history of that site area.

Mrs. Quinn asked Mr. Peterson about the new farmer's market buildings and what they would be used for.

Mr. Peterson explained there would be an indoor commercial kitchen to be used year-round for various purposes and that someone will cook items purchased from the market on a weekly basis highlighting certain menus. There will be electricity and water for every stall. He also explained the parking and driving set up on Market Street.

Mrs. Burr moved to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 p.m.; the motion carried unanimously.

The next scheduled meeting is March 4, 2014, at 5:30 p.m.